
NEWS From:

US Rep. Mike Honda

15th District - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Bill Remedies Injustice Done to Korean Immigrants
Corruption Scheme Wrongfully Netted Innocents

Washington, DC – **US Rep. Mike Honda** (D-San José), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), today introduced legislation that provides relief specifically to 275 Korean immigrants who were victimized in one of the largest green card fraud schemes in California history.

“This bill will bring justice to the innocent Koreans who unwittingly contracted with rogue immigration brokers and were caught in the investigatory net,” Congressman Honda said. “These immigrants – many of whom are successful Bay Area professionals who lead well-established lives as doctors, architects, and high-tech engineers – deserve fair treatment.”

“Rep. Honda’s bill justly protects the rights of innocent Koreans who have become victims of immigration fraud through no fault of their own,” the Korean American Coalition, a non-partisan advocacy organization, said in a statement. “These individuals who received fraudulent green cards were unaware of the fraudulent scheme orchestrated by one INS supervisor and several immigrant consultants.”

The issue stems from a longstanding scheme of fraud and bribery perpetrated by a veteran government official based in the San Jose, California office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Over the course of 12 years, this corrupt INS official accepted more than \$500 million in bribes from various immigration brokers in exchange for green cards.

These fraudulent immigration brokers, in turn, directed the green cards to their unsuspecting clients - Korean immigrants who had no reason to believe they were involved in anything other than a lawful process. Although the corrupt INS official managed to avoid jail time by bargaining his testimony in exchange for a fine and probation, four of the immigration brokers involved in this green card scheme were convicted in 1999.

Rep. Honda’s bill provides relief specifically to the 275 wrongfully affected Korean immigrants. To be eligible for the relief in the bill, the immigrant had to be in a valid non-immigrant status prior to seeking adjustment of status. The bill defines the “fraud”

that took place as procurement of a green card through bribery by immigration brokers of an INS official with no actual knowledge of the immigrant.

If found to be an “eligible” alien, that person would be treated as though the fraud in procuring the green card had not taken place; so long as they were otherwise eligible, they would regain the immigration status they had as if the fraud had not taken place.

The bill is narrowly written so that it would apply only to the immigrants affected in this particular fraud scheme.

“Uprooting these unknowing victims from their homes, families, careers, and communities would clearly be an injustice,” Honda said. “In their quest for the American Dream, these hard-working Koreans were exploited by a corrupt immigration official and immigration brokers, and this legislation will remedy that wrongdoing.”

The bill has the support of Reps. Jim Moran (D-VA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Lane Evans (D-IL), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam), Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Gene Green (D-TX), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Sam Farr (D-CA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), John Conyers (D-MI), and Hilda Solis (D-CA).

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